

relevant to the northward expansion of human populations during successive temporal and geographical stages. The second chapter, "Out of Africa," summarizes information about the Great Apes and about early human evolution, through to the expansion of *Homo erectus* from Africa into southern Eurasia approximately 1.8 million years ago. "The First Europeans" documents the earliest human occupations of significantly northern latitudes approximately 800 000 years ago. This is followed by "Cold Weather People," which deals with the occupation of Europe and adjacent areas by the Neanderthals between 300 000 and 30 000 years ago. "Modern Humans in the North" jumps back in time to the origins of anatomically modern *Homo sapiens* in Africa and then summarizes the archaeological evidence for their colonization of Europe and Asia up to a latitude of approximately 60° N. The following chapter, "Into the Arctic," documents the period after the last Glacial Maximum approximately 20 000 years ago, which saw the initial spread of people above the Arctic Circle. That chapter also documents the human occupation of Beringia and expansion into the Americas. The final chapter, "Peoples of the Circumpolar Zone," summarizes all of recent Arctic prehistory up to the present day.

That brief synopsis of the book reveals one of its genuine strengths and hints at a couple of its weaknesses. A real strength is its broad scope and its attempt to understand the human occupation of the high latitudes as part of a process that can be traced far back in human biological and cultural evolution. Throughout the book Hoffecker documents cultural developments and biological changes that he believes were critical to human success in increasingly cold climates and northern latitudes. The book is also meticulously annotated, with 39 pages of endnotes and an extensive bibliography. But the grand scale of the task Hoffecker has set himself, combined with his decision to write a relatively short book, means that most of the really important topics are dealt with in a very cursory fashion. A book that in just 142 pages discusses both the origins of human bipedalism and the migration of the Thule culture into Arctic Canada, plus everything that happened in between, really can't go into any topic in adequate detail. That leads to what I perceive as another weakness: it is difficult to identify a large audience for whom this book would represent an entirely satisfactory treatment of the topic. Readers without any background in Arctic prehistory but interested in learning about human occupations of the North will be disappointed by the limited amount of information on that region in this book. Conversely, readers who are somewhat knowledgeable about Arctic prehistory but interested in learning how humans came to arrive there will probably already be familiar with the broad story of human evolution and will find this book to be too much of a survey.

Despite these criticisms, Hoffecker is to be congratulated for taking on such an interesting and ambitious topic. Through the extensive annotations and bibliography, he has made sure that anyone wishing to explore specific

topics in more depth will be able to access the relevant literature easily.

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UQALURAIT: AN ORAL HISTORY OF NUNAVUT.

Compiled and edited by JOHN BENNETT and SUSAN ROWLEY. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2004. ISBN 0-7735-2340-5. xxxii + 473 p., maps, colour plates and b&w illus., glossary, bib., index. Hardbound. Cdn\$49.95.

One of the most pressing heritage concerns in Nunavut today relates to the precarious status of Inuit oral history and traditional knowledge. The fount of Inuit cultural and linguistic continuity, this knowledge is no longer being passed down orally in the seamless manner that characterized its transmission only a few generations ago. Many factors now inhibit this natural transfer, the most frequently cited being the gradual withdrawal from a land-based life, a widening "generation gap," modern schooling (despite late—perhaps too late—efforts to deliver culturally relevant curricula), mass media, language loss, and the general distractions of an increasingly urbanized settlement life.

This situation is made more urgent by the inescapable fact that most of Nunavut's oral history resides unrecorded in the ageing memories of a rapidly diminishing number of elders whose formative years were spent on the land, at arm's length from the now ubiquitous agencies of southern Canada. Today's Inuit elders represent the last generation with a firsthand link to a virtually vanished way of life, as yet inadequately documented.

Faced with this pending loss, a few Nunavut communities, notably Igloolik, Baker Lake, Arviat, and Cambridge Bay, have sought, through their historical societies and elders' organizations, to preserve at least some of their oral heritage by interviewing local elders and recording their responses. Sporadic oral history projects funded over the years by the governments of the Northwest Territories and Nunavut, as well as a number of projects undertaken by Parks Canada in the Qikiqtaaluk and Kivalliq regions, have added to the growing, but still meager collection of Inuit traditional knowledge.

Uqalurait: An Oral History of Nunavut derives much of its content from these disparate initiatives, augmented by interviews conducted by the volume's compilers, John Bennett and Susan Rowley. Additional material is drawn from explorers' journals, conspicuously from Knud Rasmussen's *Fifth Thule Expedition*, and, refreshingly, from some later, relatively untapped sources such as the

unpublished transcripts of the *Inuit Land Use and Occupancy Study*, Maurice Metayer's *Unipkat*, and earlier issues of the Arctic's two pedigreed magazines, *Inuktitut* and *Eskimo*.

The result is an impressive assemblage of traditional knowledge incorporating hundreds of attributed quotes from individual Inuit, albeit in English translation. The whole text has the imprimatur of an Inuit committee established to advise and direct the volume's compilers. *Uqalurait*'s quotes are often interspersed with brief contextual links—connective tissue, as it were—supplied by the compilers in an attempt (not always successful) to provide some textual cohesiveness. The book is organized, rather clinically, under two major headings, "Inuit Identity" and "Regional Identity." The former category incorporates numerous themes (the family, animals, hunting, leadership, justice, shamanism, and dwellings, to name a few), while the latter deals mainly with selected seasonal activities of the region.

Regrettably, the book's initial reception is likely to be unfairly compromised by what, for many, will be its somewhat misleading subtitle: *An Oral History of Nunavut*. Readers drawn to *Uqalurait* on this promise, hoping for a more-or-less conventional history in which a flowing, temporal narrative informs the present by illuminating the past, are bound to feel let down. *Uqalurait*'s compilers, anticipating this reaction, point out in their thoughtful introduction that the book's perspective "lies outside the realm of dates and other temporal absolutes" (p. xxvi), and that it adheres to "the Inuit view of life, not as a linear progression but as a cycle" (p. xxxvii). Perhaps; but these caveats will not entirely placate readers anticipating the more familiar approach. On the other hand, those subscribing to Northrop Frye's view that good history is "the social memory of human experience" will be far more accepting, for there is much here about both memory and experience, and all from the Inuit perspective.

History or not, *Uqalurait*'s main limitation is the decision to focus almost entirely on "the period before Inuit adopted Christianity, but after they acquired firearms and traded regularly with whalers and others" (p. xxvii). In choosing this perspective, the book's steering committee sought "to get to the heart of Inuit culture and to give the reader a sense of the richness and completeness of the life that countless generations lived on the land and sea ice" (p. xxvii). All very well, but this decision effectively excluded from the Inuit testimony (and if the Igloodik interviews are any indication, rich, well-articulated testimony) virtually all references to the contact period, the adoption of Christianity, and the subsequent interrelationships with traders, missionaries, and, ultimately, Canadian government agencies. These tumultuous encounters, along with the negotiations they necessitated, have irrevocably shaped Nunavut's present society. Including the memories and experiences of these periods documented by Inuit who lived through them would have allowed the book to speak much more directly to the present.

Uqalurait is copiously illustrated throughout, although the carefully chosen colour prints offered at the start of the volume are unfortunately marred by poor reproduction. The many black-and-white photographs are in most cases particularly well selected, attributed, and captioned, as well as appropriately integrated with the text.

Clearly an enormous amount of searching, sorting, and editing went into the compilation of this volume. An honest attempt has been made to be as representative as possible; however, doubtless because of the uneven distribution of oral history projects, some regions of Nunavut (Amitturmiut, for instance) have much more to say than others, while the Belcher Islands—curiously part of Nunavut by geopolitical default—are quietly ignored.

In the end, *Uqalurait*, although far from comprehensive, serves very well as a readily accessible compendium of Nunavut oral history and, in doing so, provides some remarkable, much-needed glimpses into many little-known facets of traditional Inuit life and culture.

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EASTERN ARCTIC KAYAKS: HISTORY, DESIGN, TECHNIQUE. By JOHN D. HEATH and E. ARIMA, with contributions by JOHN BRAND, HUGH COLLINGS, HARVEY GOLDEN, H.C. PETERSEN, JOHANNES ROSING, and GREG STAMER. Fairbanks: University of Alaska Press, 2004. ISBN 1-889963-25-9. x + 161 p., maps, b&w illus., bib., glossary, index. Hardbound. US\$45.00.

Editors Heath and Arima are well known to most kayakers, scholars, and scientists around the world studying traditional and modern Inuit kayaks. They have worked together for over 20 years on *Eastern Arctic Kayaks*, and the result is truly an important contribution to kayak studies. It cannot be said that this is *the* book; nevertheless, their numerous lists of articles and the two classics *The Bark Canoes and Skin Boats of North America* (Adney and Chapelle, 1964) and *Skinboats of Greenland* (Petersen, 1986) provide most of what is to be said about kayaks, their form and function, history, and technique.

E. Arima is known from several articles about the kayak, and particularly for *Inuit Kayaks in Canada* (1987) and *Contributions to Kayak Studies*, which he edited in 1991.

John Heath died in 2003 at the age of 80, and it is sad to realize that he did not see the final result of his and E. Arima's exceptional co-operation. In memory of John Heath, a warm preface was written by Duncan R. Winning OBE, honorary president of both the Scottish Canoe Association and the Historic Canoe and Kayak Association.